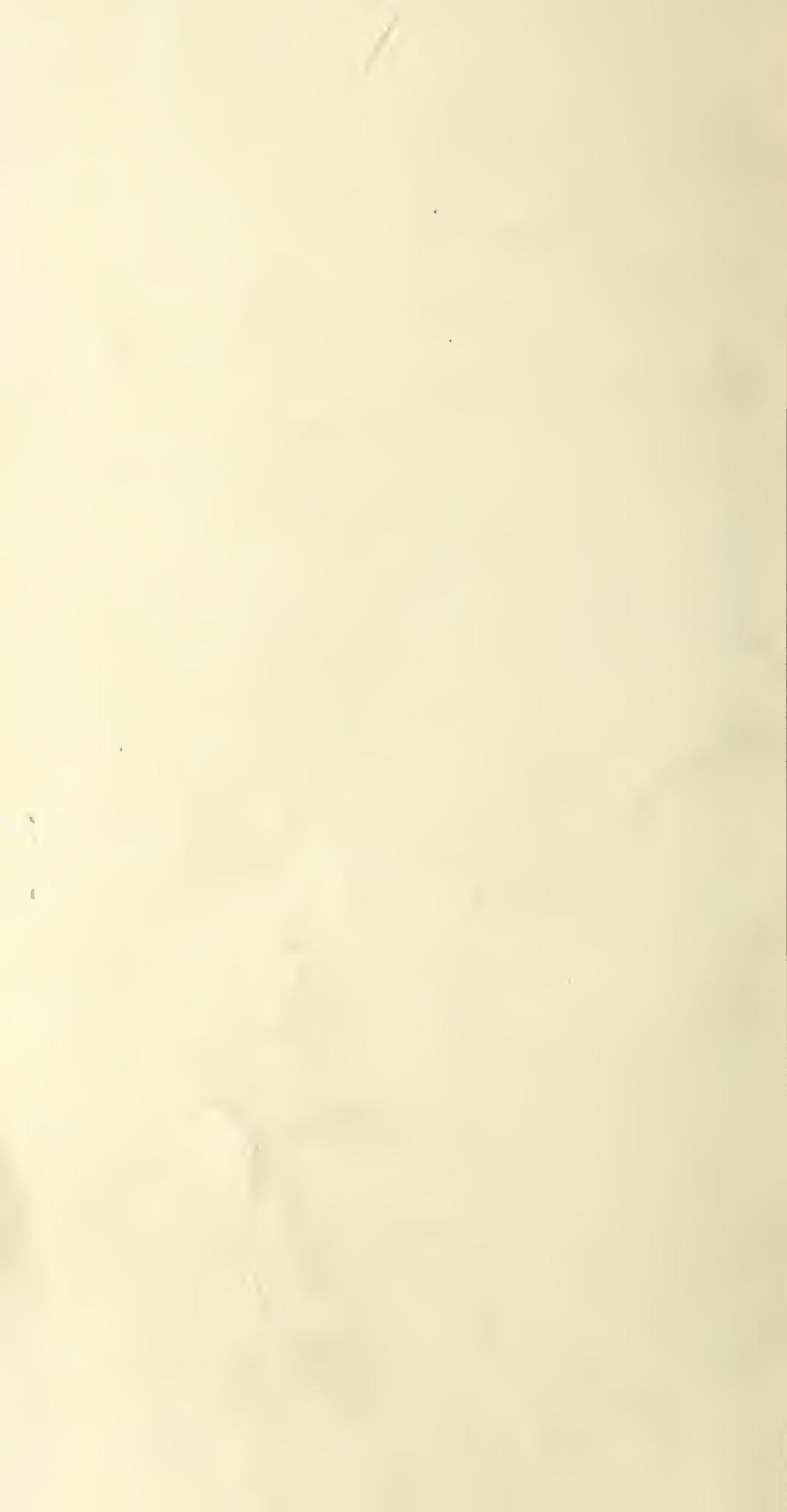


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OFFICE OF
INFORMATION

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

U. S. 5335

Monday, July 1, 1935

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "FRUIT JELLY NOTES." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

The news I have for you today is about that summer preserving art so dear to the heart of old-fashioned housewives -- jelly-making. And the news is not only for the lucky lady who lives on a farm where she has plenty of her own fruit for jelly, but also for the one who lives in a city apartment and wants to put a few choice glassfuls of sparkling jelly in her little kitchenette.

Jelly-making, you see, is small-quantity business. With the right equipment, you can do your canning successfully in large doses. But the finest jelly you make little by little. Four to six cups of fruit juice are enough to handle at a time. That's why you can make just as fine a jelly on your little kitchenette stove as your cousin in the country can with her big kitchen.

The utensils you need for making jelly aren't much of a problem either -- most of them you'll have on hand even in a small kitchen. You'll need a pan for washing the fruit and a brush for the hard fruits. Then you'll want a colander; stainless steel paring knives; scales; a quart cup; a standard measuring cup; a large, shallow kettle for cooking fruit; and long-handled spoons. You'll also want a jelly bag, of course. Many expert jelly-makers believe that the ideal jelly bag is made of canton flannel with the nap side in. But you can make your bag of two or three thicknesses of good quality cheese cloth. Or you can use a sugar bag -- a sugar bag that you have washed and rinsed well, of course.

Then you'll need a support for the bag. You can buy a frame made to hold it, or you can set hooks in the wall for this purpose. You'll need a large pan for sterilizing the jelly glasses; a tray to set these glasses in; a saucepan for cooking the jelly; a teaspoon; paraffin and a small pan for melting it; and labels.

There's the equipment the complete jelly maker needs. And, as you see, about the only special item on the list is the jelly bag and the standard for holding it.

Any good jelly-maker will tell you that success depends a great deal on the fruit you choose for your jelly. Jellying occurs only when you have three things together -- acid, pectin, and sugar. You know, pectin is a substance which forms in the pulp of many fruits as they ripen and causes this thickening that we call jellying. The best fruits for jelly-making, then, are those with a tart flavor that are also rich in pectin -- fruits like currants, red and black raspberries, blackberries, gooseberries, wild goose plums, wild grapes

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and Concord grapes, crabapples, tart winter apples like winesaps and Ben Davis, and quinces and cranberries. That's quite a list, you see. Almost all the season some fruit is ready that makes especially good jelly. But whichever kind you choose, remember that firm fruit that is slightly underripe makes the best jelly.

Getting the fruit ready is a job that requires a little care if you want perfect jelly as a result. First, wash the fruit thoroughly. Then, discard any damaged parts. Be very careful not to bruise and soak berries when you wash them. You know how delicate they are. Leave currants on their stems when you cook them for jelly. And leave the skins on grapes and plums, and also apples and quinces. You remove the stems and blossom ends from these last two fruits but leave the cores and skins. Cut them in pieces for quicker cooking.

I should have mentioned the kettle you cook the juice in when we were talking about equipment. A broad, flat-bottomed kettle is the kind best adapted for jelly and preserve making. Here's why. It gives a wide surface for evaporation and you can get concentrated juice quickly. The quicker you can get this juice cooked down, the more color and flavor and so on you'll save in the fruit.

How much water you put in with the fruit when you cook it, or whether you add any water at all depends on whether the fruit is firm or soft and juicy. Always be careful not to add too much water, since this has to cook off and means over-cooking the fruit. Apples and crabapples, quinces and wild grapes take 1 cup of water to 1 pound of fruit -- or "water to cover" as some recipes say. But juicy fruits like currants, Concord grapes, blackberries and black raspberries need only a quarter of a cup of water to each pound of fruit. In fact, if these fruits are very juicy, you can sometimes get along with no water at all. Gooseberry jelly is an old-time favorite. And gooseberries will take about a quarter of a cup of water for each pound. Never add water to red raspberries.

How firm the fruit is also decides how long it needs to cook. Crush soft fruits to start the flow of juice. After the juice begins to boil, soft fruits will need to cook only from five to ten minutes more. Firm fruits like apples and quinces will need from twenty-five to thirty minutes.

Now pour the hot cooked fruit at once into your jelly bag. Let the juice drip from it, taking its own time. Don't squeeze the bag or you'll make cloudy jelly. Some fruits, like currants and crabapples, are so rich in jelly-making substances that you can extract the juice twice in this way.

Measure your juice and sugar carefully. The proportions depend on the kind of fruit. For currants, gooseberries, crabapples and wild grapes, use 1 cup of sugar to each cup of juice. For the sweeter fruits like blackberries, raspberries, apples and quinces, use three-fourth cups of sugar to each cup of juice.

Heat the fruit juice and the sugar together. Stir only until the sugar dissolves. Boil rapidly until the mixture gives the jelly test. Test by dipping up a large spoonful of the boiling sirup and letting it run down the side. When it reaches the stage where it no longer runs off the spoon in a steady stream but separates in two distinct lines of drops which "sheet" together, stop cooking at once.

All this time your jelly glasses have been waiting in boiling water. Now lift them out and pour the hot jelly into the hot glasses. Be careful not to let the sirup drip or splash on the rim. Let the jelly stand until set -- 12 hours or longer. Then seal with paraffin, label, and store in a cool place.

